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1810450

Please recycle

President's summary

UNCTAD contributions to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

(Agenda item 12)

1. Under the agenda item, a high-level panel, comprising the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Kenya Power Lighting Company and the Co-Founder of Enekio (France), discussed transformational energy access in the least developed countries.

2. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD, in his opening remarks, highlighted that energy was an enabler of structural transformation. Realizing the ambitions of Sustainable Development Goal 7 required identification of actionable tasks and measurable results for investment, access and provision of better quality. There was a widening electricity divide between the least developed countries and other developing/developed economies, which underscored that progress in the least developed countries would largely determine whether Goal 7 would be achieved or not.

3. The first panellist stated that Sustainable Development Goal 7 was the "golden thread" that linked other Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Paris Agreement. She noted the substantial gap in financing transformational energy access, urging the international community to continue deliberating on financing for sustainable development. She also called for a strengthening of technology transfer to the least developed countries, including through more effective international support measures.

4. The next panellist, recalling a ministerial statement on the reform of fossil fuel subsidies at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, called for renewing international efforts to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and redirect resources towards renewable energy. Based on the experience of the Republic of Moldova, he highlighted the importance of market-driven measures to spur transition towards cleaner energy sources and greater energy efficiency.

5. The next panellist highlighted relevant lessons for the least developed countries, based on the experience of Kenya. He stressed the importance of a diversified power generation mix and of decentralized power generation. He highlighted the objectives of the country's affirmative action for energy access, arguing that aid and public resources remained critical for subsidizing last-kilometre grid connection. Finally, he called for better harnessing of South–South cooperation and regional power pools.

6. The last panellist stated that different actors used distinct strategies to deliver significant economic impact in energy access. Drawing on the experience in rural Senegal of the company Enekio, he highlighted the importance of simultaneously acting on energy supply and demand, engaging local communities. Well-designed mini-grids were capable of providing electricity at the same price as in Dakar, achieving profitability also in remote areas. The panellist cautioned, however, that guarantees from regional development banks played a key role.

7. The representative of one regional group and several delegates commended UNCTAD for its work on transformational energy access, arguing that the work would be an important contribution to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development. They concurred with the call for strengthening measures to promote technology transfer. Another regional group noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should not be implemented selectively. The least developed countries could also do more to mobilize domestic resources. Some panellists noted that, while the Sustainable Development Goals constituted a single framework, energy still played a fundamental role in enabling development and powering structural transformation.

8. One panellist noted that the complexity of Sustainable Development Goal 7 demonstrated the need for the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system to meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. In response to a request for clarification by one delegate, she said there would be detailed briefings with delegations and country teams, while the precise working of a hybrid funding mechanism would require consideration.

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1810451

Please recycle

President's summary

Activities of UNCTAD in support of small island developing States and in support of landlocked developing countries

(Agenda item 8)

1. Under the agenda item, the Director of the UNCTAD Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes highlighted growing awareness and political will to address the challenges of landlocked developing countries. He expressed concern that the weak economic performance of landlocked developing countries since the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 put their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at risk. The UNCTAD secretariat then provided an overview of its activities in support of landlocked developing countries.

2. The representatives of several regional groups and some delegates noted the continuing challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, and the need for greater efforts in trade and transport facilitation, building productive capacities and achieving structural transformation. One regional group expressed concern at the recent slowdown in growth of landlocked developing countries, while another regional group noted the declining share of official development assistance and foreign direct investment flows to landlocked developing countries. Another regional group highlighted its assistance measures for landlocked developing countries, through official development assistance and market access, and emphasized the importance of improved cooperation to strengthen regional value chains in landlocked developing countries. The representative of another regional group noted that the work of UNCTAD on developing a productive capacities index was fundamental for landlocked developing countries. He requested the secretariat to also provide more disaggregated data on assistance delivered only to landlocked developing countries. One delegate requested UNCTAD to take into account the challenges facing transit countries in its work on transport facilitation. Another delegate requested UNCTAD to strengthen its programme on science, technology and innovation policy reviews.

3. Several regional groups and some delegates expressed appreciation for the work of UNCTAD in support of the landlocked developing countries and the report presented. Some regional groups and one delegate called on UNCTAD to provide substantive support to the midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action. Several regional groups and one delegate further called on member States to provide greater support to the work of UNCTAD on landlocked developing countries. One regional group and one delegate requested that, within UNCTAD, the Landlocked Developing Countries Section be strengthened, through greater resources allocation. Furthermore, the representative of the regional group called for enhanced interdivisional cooperation on landlocked developing countries. Another delegate inquired about the resources currently allocated to landlocked developing countries in UNCTAD, and how much was required for UNCTAD to be fully enabled to implement its mandate on landlocked developing countries. The UNCTAD secretariat took note of the request for further information on resources, agreeing on the importance of the issue, which would be discussed during an appropriate forum.

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GE.18-10452(E)

1810452

Please recycle

President's summary

Contribution of UNCTAD to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

(Agenda item 10)

1. In his opening remarks, the Director of the UNCTAD Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes provided an overview of the economic situation of the least developed countries. The global economic environment for the least developed countries had deteriorated and become increasingly challenging. The economic performance of the least developed countries could be significantly improved by building their economic resilience to external shocks, including by reorienting domestic policies and rebalancing international support measures to focus on enhancing productive capacities, diversification and inclusive structural transformation. The Directed presented the case of the European Union–UNCTAD programme of support for Angola as a model of interdivisional cooperation for the benefit of the least developed countries. He noted that a shift from project-based financing to more integrated programme-based support would have direct and long-term advantages in supporting the least developed countries. The UNCTAD secretariat then presented the report on its contribution to implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action).

2. The representatives of many regional groups expressed appreciation for the activities conducted by UNCTAD in the context of implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action. Several regional groups highlighted the challenges in implementation to achieving the targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action. They cited, for instance, a shortfall in achieving the graduation target, reaching economic diversification, doubling the share of least developed country exports and increasing the participation of the least developed countries in value chains. Many regional groups stressed the importance of improving support to the least developed countries to achieve structural transformation and increase productive capacity. One regional group emphasized that sustainable development was achieved only through economic diversification and structural transformation. Another regional group recognized the spillover effects that productive capacity had on the economy. Several regional groups pointed out that structural transformation and productive capacity were paramount for the least developed countries to move beyond graduation. One regional group encouraged UNCTAD to continue cooperating with other agencies and welcomed UNCTAD efforts in seeking funds to implement Istanbul Programme of Action. The representative of another regional group emphasized its support for the least developed countries, citing examples (official development assistance, trade facilitation, investment and the Angola project). He further suggested that future sessions of the Trade and Development Board could consider *The Least Developed Countries Report* and activities in support of the least developed countries under a single agenda item.

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GE.18-10454(E)

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President's summary

Technology and innovation as effective means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

(Agenda item 6)

1. Under the agenda item, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD made opening remarks at the meeting.

2. The Director of the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics then made a presentation, and a panel of two experts shared insights on the opportunities for and challenges of harnessing frontier technologies for sustainable development. The discussion highlighted the role of frontier technologies in helping to address sustainable development objectives and underlined deficiencies in technological capabilities, particularly in developing countries and the least developed countries, as a major obstacle in harnessing the potential of technology. The panel consisted of the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Transformative Technologies and Founder of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Institute for Globally Transformative Technologies, and the Director of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of Ghana.

3. The representatives of many regional groups and many delegates commended UNCTAD on the quality and relevance of the *Technology and Innovation Report 2018: Harnessing Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development*. One regional group noted that the report was of interest for all member States. Some delegations expressed satisfaction with discussing technology in the context of UNCTAD work and suggested inclusion of the topic in forthcoming agendas of the Trade and Development Board.

4. One regional group indicated that there was a need to strike a balance regarding investment in frontier technologies for developing countries, to ensure that they became a vehicle for inclusive growth and sustainable development. One delegate suggested that the least developed countries required a strategy for adopting frontier technologies. Another delegate emphasized the importance of actions to support developing countries to avoid making existing technological divides worse.

5. Several delegates highlighted the importance of technology transfer as a fundamental building block for increasing capacity in science, technology and innovation and a prerequisite to harnessing the full potential of frontier technologies. Some delegations suggested that fostering greater entrepreneurial environment within national borders, including for women, was required to ensure access to technologies was effective and sustainable.

6. Some delegations noted the need for ethical, economic and social challenges caused by rapid technological change to be considered by all relevant stakeholders and to provide substance in the form of national and regional strategies. Some delegates emphasized that, in addition to aid, private investment should also constitute a means of resource mobilization to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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GE.18-10495(E)

1810495

Please recycle

President's summary

Annual report of the Secretary-General

(Agenda item 4)

1. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD noted that she was presenting the agenda item on behalf of the Secretary General of UNCTAD, who had wished to be present but was regrettably undertaking an official mission. She was confident that she would be able to respond to any questions from delegations. Drawing on the statement of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD delivered in relation to the agenda item,[1*] the Deputy Secretary-General highlighted areas where UNCTAD had made significant contributions, including work to support the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, process of graduation of the least developed countries, financing for economic development and bridging the digital divide.

2. Some delegates praised the annual report of the Secretary-General, while requesting more information on results-based management, budget and consensus-building. One delegation requested clarification on the significant amount of technical cooperation expenditures focused on Sustainable Development Goal 9. The Deputy Secretary-General responded that the secretariat had tried to take the requests of all stakeholders into consideration in preparing the annual report. Expenditures on Sustainable Development Goal 9 were primarily extrabudgetary resources committed to the Automated System for Customs Data programme, the largest technical cooperation programme of UNCTAD. She suggested that delegates should read the statement in relation to the agenda item and the *UNCTAD Annual Report 2017*, which was structured to report on UNCTAD activities on the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals and included examples of the impact UNCTAD work had directly on communities in developing countries.

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* Delivered by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on 4 June 2018 at the opening plenary meeting of the sixty-fifth session, part I, of the Trade and Development Board. Copies of the statement were distributed in the conference room.

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GE.18-10496(E)
1810496

Please recycle

President's summary

Matters requiring action by the Board in the follow-up to the fourteenth session of the Conference

(Agenda item 11)

1. The President of the Trade and Development Board provided background information on the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and implementation of phase II of the revitalization of the intergovernmental machinery, under the mandate of the Nairobi Maafikiano. The Facilitator of the Consultative Group of the Whole on the phase II process thanked delegates for their commitment throughout the process to helping UNCTAD refocus its mission and responsibility for implementing the Nairobi Maafikiano to support developing nations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. During the Board's consideration of a draft decision, entitled "Revitalization of the existing intergovernmental machinery", on the agenda item, one delegation reiterated that, going beyond phase II, member States could continue to look at how to improve deliberations and how they contributed to solving development challenges.

3. Another delegation noted that the Nairobi Maafikiano had set goals for the forthcoming two years and expressed readiness to work continuously with the secretariat to "make UNCTAD great again".

4. Some delegations were pleased with the draft decisions document and hoped further ideas could be discussed in the next quadrennial conference. One delegate said that delegations should not wait until the next conference to discuss the intergovernmental machinery, but rather should strive to talk as soon as they had the opportunity. He agreed with the idea of working together to "make UNCTAD great again".

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GE.18-10493(E)

1810493

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President's summary

Economic development in Africa

(Agenda item 5)

1. The representatives of many regional groups and many delegates expressed their appreciation for the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2018: Migration and Structural Transformation*, noting its timeliness given the visibility of migration on the global agenda.

2. Several regional groups and several delegates commended the report's focus and analysis of the contribution of intra-African migration to structural transformation, noting the novel and innovative approach. Some regional groups highlighted that the report's recommendations on aligning migration, trade and investment policies, the need for investment in infrastructure and energy to support commodities value chains development and the support of the international community in establishing mechanisms to ensure migration could contribute to Africa's structural transformation. Another regional group noted that the report's focus on migration and structural transformation and its practical recommendations were aligned with the UNCTAD mandate.

3. Several delegations highlighted the importance of labour migration. The removal of preferences for Moroccan nationals and the abolition of work permit fees for member States of the East African Community were good practices in facilitating labour migration.

4. Several regional groups and several delegates noted the importance of remittances for African economies. Some delegations said that the high cost of money transfer fees limited remittances' potential to contribute to Africa's development.

5. Some regional groups and some delegates highlighted migration's contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while several delegations commended the report's focus on gender.

6. Some regional groups and some delegates welcomed the adoption of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The Single African Air Transport Market and the Protocol on the Free Movement of People were critical to supporting migration objectives.

7. Several delegations acknowledged the cross-cutting nature and complexity of migration and migration policy. One regional group noted the need for efforts to situate migration policies within regional frameworks.

8. Another regional group noted that the report was an important contribution to consultations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and provided evidence for supporting a development pillar under the Global Compact. The UNCTAD secretariat emphasized the need for collective action on migration management and support for a development pillar under the Global Compact. UNCTAD would hold a high-level event on migration during the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018.